

The Holocaust by Bullets

Book Review

[Kosto Tamo](#)

In the immediate after-war period, it was widely believed that Nazi extermination camps existed in Germany and Poland. The barbaric Allied saturation bombing,^[1] which had led to the collapse of the German transportation, food-distribution and medical networks, provoked a chaos exacerbated by the arrival of millions of refugees fleeing the Soviet invasion in the East. The result was starvation and the spread of disease (typhus, cholera) among millions of unfortunates, including camp inmates – many of whom succumbed. Photos of skeletal survivors were seized upon for hate-propaganda purposes, while the camps which still managed to function with some degree of normality and whose inmates were in relatively good shape, were largely ignored.

Subsequently, it became evident from available documentation and material evidence that no order had been given for the mass murder of Jews. No trace has been found of any plan, budget, or weapon, nor has a single autopsied body been shown to have been gassed.

During and after the war there were “eyewitnesses” to mass gassings at Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, and other camps in Germany proper. Today, virtually all recognized scholars dismiss this testimony as false. Establishment historians, however, still claim that mass gassings happened at several camps in Poland. The evidence for this claim is, in reality, qualitatively no different to the false testimony and evidence for the alleged mass gassings at the camps in Germany proper.^[2]

The “confessions” obtained in Nuremberg were not infrequently obtained through torture or the threat of being handed over to the Soviets.

Under these circumstances, the search was on to find new “killing fields.” To the rescue came an organization called *Yahad - In Unum* and its director Father Patrick Desbois. This organization was created in January 2004 on the initiative of three French archbishops (including a former Archbishop of Paris Mgr. Lustiger, a Polish Jew who, according to his wishes, is buried in Israel), Rabbi Israël Singer, a former President of the World Jewish Congress, Mr. Serge Cwajgenbaum, Secretary-General of the World Jewish Congress, and Mr. Pinchas Shapiro. It is sponsored by a number of foundations and organizations as well as by the Municipality of Paris.^[3] Father Desbois is also director of the (French) Episcopal Committee for Relations with Judaism.



On May 12, 2011, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Hannah Rosenthal recognized the work of Father Patrick Desbois, President of the Yahad-In Unum Association of France, with a Tribute of Appreciation certificate.

By U.S. Department of State, photographer not specified [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Desbois and his team set to work scouring the Ukrainian and Belorussian country sides for evidence of mass executions, plumbing the memories of local populations for clues. Evidence was forthcoming of what was duly dubbed a “Holocaust by Bullets” which began in 1941—that is, before the Wannsee Conference (January 1942) and before the alleged Polish and German camp exterminations.

In 2008 Father Desbois’s account of his work, *Porteur de mémoires : Sur les traces de la Shoah par balles*, appeared in its English translation as *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*.^[4] One must wonder if any normally endowed person perusing this exposé could still seriously entertain the veracity of the *Shoah*. Inter alia, it recounts uncritically what we consider metaphysical phenomena and proffers unsubstantiated assertions designed to convey a picture of diabolically sadistic murderers intent on maximizing the suffering of their victims. The book amounts to an extended diatribe of hatred toward Germans.

In establishing his credentials, Desbois assures us of his own and his family's near-saintly qualities. On p. 67 he confides modestly:

With the influence of my family and my religious tradition, I have always taken the position of resistance in the face of evil—I am a person who unites with others to fight evil wherever it resides, ...

— in sum, a modern-day Don Quixote. His *Acknowledgements* (p. 215) first cite “my grandfather, Claudius Desbois, who gave me the thirst for truth. Thank you to my father and mother who gave me the taste for justice and truth.” On page 5 he tells us:

I didn't find out till much later that the German pilots taken prisoner by the Maquis [anti-Nazi guerillas — Ed.] had been tortured in my grandparents' farm before being shot in the forest across from the house.

So it would seem that the parents' taste for justice didn't come from Grandfather Claudius; but of course the pilots were only German *boche*, unworthy of being treated as prisoners-of-war. On the other hand, when beggars came into the family shop, his mother used to say:

“You have to give them half a rabbit, but only give them the good bits, the thighs!” And we were perfectly happy to eat the rabbit ribs ourselves.

Patrick Desbois should not be confused with Robin Des Bois (the French name for Robin Hood). Rather, he is an anti-Robin Hood who is out to rob poor Europeans to give to rich Jewish organizations. On p. 100 he recounts presenting his research to the Claims Conference (the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany) which, as the book explains, was founded in 1951 in New York “to represent and offer reparations for the victims and the Jewish survivors of the *Shoah*.” The Conference happens to be one of *Yahad - In Unum's* sponsors. However, lest we misunderstand, Desbois takes the bull by the horns on p. 166:

Money and Jews, Jews and money. I am very familiar with this kind of association. These clichés often lead insidiously to hatred and violence.

We suggest he contemplate Nahum Goldmann's viewpoint as expressed in *The Jewish Paradox* (Athenäum, Frankfurt 1988, p. 77):

I hardly exaggerate. Jewish life exists of two elements: extracting money and whining.

On p. 121 the author, in professing his belief in the Providence of God but also his awareness of the abominable face of the world, confides that both were received from his family, his Church, “but also from the Jewish tradition. A single human race, created in the image of God.” Alas! The image of a single human race, if implying equality between races, certainly didn't come from the Jewish tradition. Just as *Animal Farm's* governing pigs proclaimed that: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others,” *Deuteronomy* 7:6 assures the chosen people:

For you are people consecrated to the Lord your God: of all the peoples on earth the Lord your God chose you to be His treasured people.

In case Gentiles didn't quite get the message clearly enough, Professor Mordechai Nisan cleared up any ambiguity in *Kivunim* (August 1984, pp. 151-156):

If Gentiles refuse to live a life of inferiority, then this signals their rebellion and the unavoidable necessity of Jewish warfare against their very presence.

Page 131 of the book captures Father Desbois in a reflective mood:

I thought of the incomprehension, contempt, pogroms, and expulsions that had marked the centuries of relationships between Catholics and Jews, preventing the coming together of our two traditions.

Since by our reading, this text nails Catholics as the villains and Jews as the innocent victims, we suggest that he might discover the motivations for this *goyish* behavior in the texts cited above. Also, he could fruitfully check out the *Talmud*.^[5]

There remains a nagging question as to how 1.5 million people could have been murdered across thousands of sites without this having come to public notice much earlier. Chapter XV is entitled “An Extermination in Every Village.” This title is justified on p. 147:

The landscape of Ukraine, village after village, east to west, was transforming itself under my eyes into an ocean of exterminations. Whether in Bahkir in west Ukraine, or in Nikolayev in east Ukraine . . . The horrors of the Holocaust were not necessarily exactly the same from one place to another, but they did unfortunately cover the whole country without exceptions.

Or again on p. 178 the author notes in despair:

I imagine that if we could open all the mass graves we would have to take aerial photos of the whole of the Ukraine. A mass cemetery of anonymous pits into which men, women and children were thrown. Not a camp but a country of graves.

The foreword to the book provides some clues to solve the mystery:

Their [the Holocaust victims'] stories and fates of their communities were obscured by clouds of Soviet secrecy and anti-Semitism.

Furthermore, there were problems related to deciphering hand-written documents and the Soviet regime’s misrepresentation of the truth (p. x).

While all this is true, we are told on p. 155 that:

The Germans had learned that whenever the Soviets arrived in a village, the first thing they would do was open the graves, photograph the bodies, and draw up a document with the help of the inhabitants of the village, the teacher, the priest, and any surviving Jews. They would also proceed with a thorough scientific analysis of the bodies.

It was this information which led the Germans to undertake “Operation 1005” (of which more below). What remains puzzling is why the Soviets apparently kept mum about their findings. It will be remembered that Churchill and Roosevelt forbade revealing the truth about Katyn. The Russians had every reason to shout to high heaven about alleged German crimes and to shift their own atrocities onto them. Had any entity such as the Red Cross or other humanitarian agencies, the Allied or neutral governments, or well-placed individuals such as Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, or Eisenhower been apprised of the killings, they would certainly have condemned them.

As indicated above, the “Holocaust by Bullets” took place *before* the Wannsee Conference, from which the order for the liquidation of the Jews allegedly emanated. From where did the orders for such a massive operation come? Were they issued on the independent initiatives of local commanders? The following text from p. 67 hints at an order from a centralized authority:

We found out that the Germans had had carte blanche regarding how to kill the Jews. A legal framework was in place that required them to assassinate the Jews, but the methods used were left to their initiative, even their sadism.

No attempt is made to justify this bald assertion. What evidence was found of a *carte blanche’s* having been given? What was the legal framework requiring them to assassinate the Jews? Was all this mere hearsay?

Yahad - In Unum set out to record the testimony of surviving eyewitnesses of the exterminations. How reliable is such evidence? An article in the *Scientific American* of 8 January 2009 entitled, “Why Science Tells Us Not to Rely on Eyewitness Accounts” and sub-titled “Eyewitness testimony is fickle and, all too often, shockingly inaccurate,” contends:

The uncritical acceptance of eyewitness accounts may stem from a popular misconception of how memory works. Many people believe that human memory works like a video recorder: the mind records events and then, on cue, plays back an exact replica of them. On the contrary, psychologists have found that memories are reconstructed rather than played back each time we recall them. The act of remembering, says eminent memory researcher and psychologist Elizabeth F. Loftus of the University of California, Irvine, is ‘more akin to putting puzzle pieces together than retrieving a video recording.’ Even questioning by a lawyer can alter the witness’s testimony because fragments of the memory may unknowingly be combined with information provided by the questioner, leading to inaccurate recall.

The final sentence is particularly relevant in the present context, as is also the article’s concluding paragraph:

Many researchers have created false memories in normal individuals; what is more, many of these subjects are certain that the memories are real. In one well-known study, Loftus and her colleague Jacqueline Pickrell gave subjects written accounts of four events, three of which they had actually experienced. The fourth story was fiction; it centered on the subject being lost in a mall or another public place when he or she was between four and six years old. A relative provided realistic details for the false story, such as a description of the mall at which the subject’s parents shopped. After reading each story, subjects were asked to write down what else they remembered about the incident or to indicate that they did not remember it at all. Remarkably about one third of the subjects reported partially or fully remembering the false event. In two follow-up interviews, 25 percent still claimed that they remembered the untrue story, a figure consistent with the findings of similar studies.

Nevertheless, in his Foreword to the book, Mr. Paul A. Shapiro claims:[\[6\]](#)

Similarly, the Soviet investigation and trial records confirm that the individuals giving testimony to Father Desbois today are remembering accurately what they saw, despite the passage of more than 60 years.

Father Desbois also assures us (p. 86) that: “The witnesses’ narratives were relentlessly precise”; but later admits (p. 204):

Weary of the stories that were not exactly true, weary of meeting people who said they wanted to tell us all but who didn't want us to know everything.

This is not surprising; as mentioned elsewhere, many Jews were slaughtered by local populations after the Soviet retreat since they were identified with Soviet atrocities (not the least of which was the early-1930s famine).

In the small Ukrainian town of Busk, which formerly was home to an important Jewish community, an exchange with one witness (Stepan Davidovski) was as follows (p. 183):

Q. *Did the Jewish police remain until the end of the ghetto?*

A. *Yes. They weren't shot. They were sent to the ghetto of Olensko, where the police were sent.*

On p. 186 we find the following exchange with Eugenia Nazarenko, who confirmed that she was referring to the Jewish police:

Q. *Were the police also killed in the cemetery?*

A. *Yes, in the same pit. First they brought the civilians, then the police.*

But Nazarenko later admits that she didn't actually see the killings:

I didn't see it myself; it was the people of the village who talked about it.

In the Crimean town of Kertch the team "happened to run into" a sailor who, "his eyes filled with tears," related (p. 107):

The sea was black. The Jews who had come here had all thrown themselves into the sea at Azov to try to achieve their last hope of survival—reaching the Russian shores. Many of them drowned.

Now, Azov is a town situated in Russia on the River Don at the other extremity of the Sea of Azov from Kertch and about 16 km inland from the sea. We presume that the Jews had in fact jumped into the sea at Kertch. Since the Kertch Strait is 3.1 km wide at its narrowest, it would seem suicidal for all but the strongest to throw themselves lemming-like into the sea.

In his foreword (p. xi) Mr. Shapiro confirms:

[W]e can now know the whole truth in all of its frightening detail. Through a magical marriage of the evidence—60-year old Soviet documents and riveting testimonies taken today, to which Father Desbois has added astonishing ballistic and forensic findings as well—we are finally able to see clearly.

We subscribe to the attributes "magical" and "astonishing" in this statement, but to not much else. We have already considered the reliability of the "riveting testimonies." While Mr. Shapiro evokes a "magical marriage," we consider this epithet accurately describes certain events uncovered by our *Yahad - In Unum* sleuths and which we term supernatural (see below). As regards the "ballistic" findings, the procedure is described on p. 53.

The Germans did not use more than one bullet to kill a Jew. Three hundred cartridges, 300 bullets, 300 people executed here. . . . The proof of genocide was so flagrant and so real. (p. 53).

True to say, proceeding in this fashion in the Ukraine, which saw very heavy fighting during the Second World War, could be qualified as “astonishing.” While Mr. Shapiro is able to see the course of events clearly, that is unfortunately not our case.



Yahad found cartridge casings used by the Nazis to murder 1,400 Jews. Motel, Belarus.

Photo Credit: Nicolas Tkatchouk/Yahad-In Unum Photo Archives

In Busk the team wished to carry out “archaeological research,”^[7] and to ensure that Jewish law was not contravened arranged for the presence of a rabbi (p. 175).

The Jewish law, the Halakha, specifies that bodies must not be moved under any circumstances, particularly the victims of the Holocaust (p. 176).

On p. 177 it is confirmed that:

It was impossible to carry out a typical scientific study because we had to respect Jewish law and not move any of the bones. We could therefore only observe what appeared on the surface.

Recourse had to be had to the German and Soviet archives for the “missing information.”

Consequently, the foreword’s reference to the team’s (astonishing) forensic findings leaves us puzzled. What were they exactly? It would seem that the “archaeological research” consisted solely of uncovering the bodies to confirm death by shooting and then covering them up again.

In fact, Professor Robert Faurisson denies the claim that Jewish law forbids the moving of bodies, pointing out that the exhumation and examination of bodies is authorized in criminal cases. He refers to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1978) under the entries “Autopsies” and “Dissection.”

When he visited Belzec (Poland) Desbois met *inter alia* (p. 23): “the carpenter who made the gas chamber.” We wonder whether a carpenter would have the *savoir-faire* to construct a gas chamber?

The assassins resorted to various subtleties to cover the sound of their misdeeds. Banging on empty buckets or requisitioning a musician to play the *buben* (a wooden percussion instrument) (p. 139). To muffle the cries of the Jews, peasants were recruited to bang saucepans, and one villager had been requisitioned to play the drum every morning (p. 136).

In June 2002 Desbois visited Rawa-Ruska, where his grandfather Claudius had been held prisoner, with René Chevalier (p. 27). René noted that fewer Jews used to return to the ghetto after work than had gone in the morning. When asked where the missing were buried, he confided:

You know, there were many holes in the airport runway at that time . . .

We imagine that there would also be a number of aircrew and passengers buried in the vicinity.

On p. 84 we find the following testimony:

We were three Ukrainian girls who, in our bare feet, had to pack down the bodies of the Jews and throw a fine layer of sand on top of them so that other Jews could lay down.

This chore was carried out after each volley of shots. As one can readily imagine, this was not an easy task; as the witness admitted (p. 85):

Many Jews were only wounded ... We had trouble walking on them.

This evidence made a marked impression on the *Yahad - In Unum* team:

That evening when we got back into the van, our eyes were full of images of these three village girls running down into the pit, trampling on the bodies, throwing sand, and coming out again on the orders of Hummel, trying to catch their breath before the next shooting.

A German policeman called Humpel performed the same duty in the village of Senkivishvka:

[He] advanced, upright, walking on the dead bodies, pistol in hand, and murdered each Jew, one after the other, with a bullet in the back of the neck (pp. xviii-xix).

Prof. Faurisson remarks that in this type of massacre the victims' abdomens explode, spraying fecal matter everywhere; the stench is unbearable, and the corpses assume all manner of postures. It would be impossible, even for expert gymnasts, to walk on this mass of entangled corpses without slipping and falling into the blood and fecal matter.^[8]

Desbois seems obsessed with showing that the Germans resorted to burying people alive. For example, in Busk:

The impact of the bullets and the position of the bodies showed that they had all been shot and buried alive. Many of the women's bodies were found holding a baby, to protect it from the flow of sand. It was three weeks of macabre discoveries (p. 177).

The impact of the bullets would certainly show that they had been shot, but how does the position of the bodies determine that they had all been buried alive? Since **all** the victims were only wounded, the executioners must either have been extraordinarily bad shots or else have deliberately avoided killing outright. The case of finding female bodies holding babies is also a recurring theme in the exposé.

Confrontation with the macabre leads us into the supernatural. On p. 65 we find:

These peasants also spoke to me of the pits as if they were alive. How was I to understand what they meant? How was I to accept the witnesses' repeated assertion that the pits 'breathed' for three days afterward?

The narrative then refers presumably to the Arabski event mentioned below, and continues:

I understood then that all the witnesses who had told us about the pits moving, accompanying their words by an up and down movement of the hand, had signified in fact that a pit took three days to quiet down because many of the victims had been buried alive. After understanding that, I accepted the true meaning of these words: 'The pit took three days to die . . .' 'the well shouted for three days.' The victims suffocated in the two or three meters of sand that was thrown on top of them.

On p. 74 we come face to face with the miraculous Arabski incident:

I remember one man, Samuel Arabski, who had been watching from behind a bush when he was requisitioned to fill in the pit. Now an old man, he explained to us, his eyes full of terror, that a Jew's hand had emerged from the pit and seized his spade. He had fainted. The pit was covered but "it was moving all over."

We are not surprised that our witness fainted. We shan't know whether the hand was trying to stop, or offering to help with, the digging.

A case of immurement in a village called Sataniv is recorded on p. 205:

"What happened during the war?" They replied, lifting their hands to the sky: "The Jews . . . the Jews . . . They were walled up. They were walled up under the marketplace in a cellar." The Germans had burnt some straw to make smoke and smother them. Then, after closing the door, they had piled two meters of earth on top. The women told us that, for four days afterwards, the Jews had tried to get out, and that one could see the ground of the marketplace moving. On the fifth day, the silence was total. The story stunned me; I had never heard anything like it. How far could people go in terms of sadism, evil, and negating others? It was an example of a limitless imagination in service of destruction.

We are just as stunned by this story as Father Desbois, who subsequently discovered in the Soviet archives that:

this immurement, carried out by the Ukrainian police, took place on May 15, 1942. According to these archives, the smoke asphyxiated the imprisoned.

So who was responsible? — Germans or Ukrainians? Were the victims asphyxiated by smoke as claimed by the Soviets, or from being buried alive as implied by the villagers? We refer back to the problem of trustworthiness of eyewitness accounts.

How long can a person survive if buried alive? The *Popular Science* forum^[9] calculates that for an average person in an average casket, all oxygen would be used up after 5½ hours. But it adds, and this is more to the point in our cases:

Even if you were able to get out of the coffin without exhausting your air supply first, you'd find yourself in a situation similar to being buried in a mega-landslide or avalanche. The dirt would be so dense and heavy that your chest wouldn't be able to expand. 'It'd be like concrete setting in the course of seconds,' says Ethan Greene, Director of the Colorado Avalanche Information Center. Snow is heavy, but earth is even heavier. And if you were able to move, the dirt would fall into your mouth or nostrils and could end up clogging your airways.

So the Sataniv victims were of particularly hardy stock. Not only were they perhaps first asphyxiated, but they then lasted for four whole days — one day better than their brethren mentioned earlier. We agree that this episode is an example of "a limitless imagination" — that of eyewitnesses.

Desbois's reference to "the well shouted for three days" presumably evokes an interview in a Ukrainian village, Bobovry Kut. The well in question "must have been around 80 meters deep" (p. 199). On p. 200 we find the following exchange:

Q. *How long did the shooting last?*

A. Around two hours. Some people fell into the well alive. Shouts were heard for three days.

Now, “about 80 meters” would be approximately the height of a 20-story building.

We are willing to concede that Yahweh may well have endowed his chosen people with special qualities to reinforce their powers of survival. However, until such time as the above-cited phenomena can be reproduced under controlled conditions, we reject them as pure fantasy. We do not demand 4 or even 3 days of live burial, just one day. For the well episode, just one-quarter of the height cited (i.e. 20 meters).

On p. 207 we learn that a “Holocaust by smothering” occurred in a Ukrainian village called Bertniki. A local resident who hid Jews smothered them with quilts during the night. On the other hand, a witness in Busk spoke of a woman who managed to hide an entire Jewish family in her cellar, while two Germans also lived with her—a commendable feat of concealment.

Father Desbois’s disclosure of the need to mount guard at night (p. 177), or to cover graves with a special tar (p. 178), in order to prevent grave robbers from stealing dental gold was not particularly flattering for the host population.

One can readily sympathize with the *Yahad - In Unum* team that theirs was a particularly arduous task; harrowing both physically and above all psychologically in view of the horrors encountered. But the job had to be done. Desbois confesses stoically on p. 109:

I had to accept to hear the unspeakable. I had to get over the disgust provoked by the accounts of infinite sadism. Sometimes we had to stop in the middle of an interview, when the horror had surpassed our understanding. We had to calm ourselves down, catch our breath, drag ourselves out of the narrative, and detach ourselves from the obscenities performed on women and children.

Hopefully, the honors which have been bestowed upon at least the team’s leader (see below) have helped compensate for the traumas occasioned by these ordeals.

Operation 1005

As mentioned above, the Germans’ awareness of Russian investigations into their activities drove the former to try to cover their tracks. Chapter XVI is devoted to this episode which

involved digging up all the victims of the Reich in Eastern Europe and burning the bodies in large furnaces. Special furnaces were designed that could fit up to two thousand bodies. The purpose was to hide all traces of the executions, particularly those performed by the Einsatzgruppen. (p. 153).

Since they sought to recover all bodies, this would have necessitated *inter alia* digging up the Rawa-Ruska airport runway.

In charge was an SS Paul Blobel who

devised a particular technique to make the burning of the bodies more efficient: he had the bodies layered with wood on metal rails as in a pyre; when it was set on fire the cremation was extremely rapid. The same method was frequently used in the extermination camps afterwards (pp. 153f.).

Was this technique an adaptation of the special furnaces or an alternative?

Operation 1005 was kept secret, the SS communicated with Berlin by means of meteorological codes: the number of clouds indicated the graves opened, and the height of the rainfall the number of bodies burnt (p. 155).

Decidedly there is no limit to human inventiveness —particularly when in the service of evil. The manipulation of such natural phenomena as clouds and rain by the Nazis represents a significant technological advance over the North American Indians' system of smoke signals. Unfortunately, Desbois does not enter into details of how the system actually functioned. How had German genius contrived to bend meteorological phenomena to its will? For example, what happened on cloudless days or when the sky was completely overcast. Perhaps they were obliged to suspend activities on such occasions. How are clouds counted? How is the height of the rain calculated? What happens when there are clouds but no rain? What if the wind was blowing in the wrong direction such that the signals went to e.g. Moscow instead of Berlin?

These extraordinary communications measures were contrived despite the fact that the whole undertaking was an open secret locally. How could one hope to hide pyres burning 2000 bodies? As Desbois notes:

Although surrounded by absolute secrecy, Operation 1005 was doubtless the best known German operation in the immediate neighborhood of the cremation sites during the genocide of the Jews (p. 154).

The situation would seem quite grotesque.

On 15-16 June 2009 an International Conference was organized in Paris on the subject of Operation 1005. We don't know if any of the questions posed above were elucidated by the participants.

Another illustration of German inventiveness in the cause of evil is furnished on p. 98:

The Nazis had taken away beauty from everything. The most luscious green landscapes became extermination fields, and Ukrainian children became the hired hands of death. The perpetrators of genocide used everything — cliffs, grain silos, beaches, irrigation wells, ditches. Everything that could be closed off was used as a prison. Schools, town halls, synagogues, wine cellars, police stations, shops, the kolkhoz pigsties, chicken houses, and stables, had become, one after the other, the antechambers of death. The landscape, buildings, and children became, in the hands of the assassins, tools to exterminate the people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Count

The foreword (p. vii) claims "over 1.5 million" victims. How does one arrive at this figure?

There seem to have been two methods employed for assessing the number of victims – counting of bodies and the counting of empty German cartridge casings. Apart from our reservations about the latter procedure, we would also add:

1. For executions carried out within villages the casings were presumably no longer recoverable.
2. Given that bodies should not be moved, how were the numbers of victims thrown down wells or buried in pits in multiple layers assessed?

3. How many drowned in the Sea of Azov (which was black with Jews trying to reach Russia)?

We were surprised to learn on p. 115 that the Germans, normally so meticulous in such matters, had charged a local boy under 14 years of age with the task of counting bodies.

How can we know that all the victims were Jews? We wonder how many of the human remains located were those of the 10-15 million estimated to have been murdered by Stalin's Jewish henchman Lazar Kaganovich in the notorious induced starvation of the early 1930s? Since we are told "the work is characterized by its rigor" (p. 59), a future edition of *The Holocaust by Bullets* may elucidate this question.

As our modern-day Don Quixote and his team pursue their research, who knows what further wondrous phenomena might come to light. Perhaps even evidence of a "Holocaust by Hypnosis"? It is a pity that the team doesn't seem to have a Sancho Panza.

Public Reaction to the Book

Here are some of the (shorter) blurbs presented in the book itself:

"Father Desbois is a generation too late to save lives. Instead, he has saved memory and history." — *The Wall Street Journal*

"[T]his modest Roman Catholic priest from Paris, without using much more than his calm voice and Roman collar, has shattered the silence surrounding a largely untold chapter of the Holocaust when Nazis killed 1.5 million Jews in Ukraine from 1941 to 1944."—*Chicago Tribune*

"An important addition to studies of the Shoah, agonizing to read and utterly necessary." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"One of the most moving, troubling and insightful books on the Holocaust, or for that matter any other subject, that I have ever read." — *The Catholic Review*

It would be a sad comment on the intelligence of the reviewers concerned if they had actually read the book. Perhaps they were merely handed the blurb and told to sign it.

In France the book received favorable press, radio and TV coverage. Criticism by local historians centered mainly on Father Desbois's tendency to present himself as a pioneer, neglecting previous research on the subject.[\[10\]](#)

The French magazine *L'Express* of 5 October, 2009 published an article which included criticisms of Desbois's procedures by people who had initially collaborated with him. The lack of scientific method in interviewing witnesses was denounced, as well as a systematic evasion of local populations' participation in the massacre of Jews, which sidestepped the reality of the situation on the ground. Following the founding of the Soviet Union, the conflict between Ukrainian Communists and Nationalists was such that a number of the latter joined the SS-Volunteer Division "Galicia." A lack of precision in the localization of certain pits was criticized, as also the occasional non-respect of the *halakha* (Jewish law).


L'Express relates that, following this criticism, Desbois retained the services of an American public relations firm to enhance his image. He also pleaded "I am not an historian."

Not surprisingly, Jewish organizations are solidly behind him.[\[11\]](#)

The United Nations was harnessed to the propaganda task when its *International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust* celebrated “Holocaust by Bullets” on 28 January 2013.

Marking the UNITED NATIONS' INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION
IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST,
Ambassador Michael Kozak, Interim Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism,
invites you to attend a screening of a Yahad-In Unum documentary about the genocide perpetrated in the former Soviet Union against Jews, Roma, and other victims of the Nazis between 1941 and 1944

“HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS”



Welcoming remarks by MARIA OTERO, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights
followed by a panel discussion moderated by
AMBASSADOR DOUGLAS DAVIDSON, Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues
with
VICTORIA HOLT, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs
SUZANNE BROWN-FLEMING, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FATHER PATRICK DESBOIS, President, Yahad-In Unum (research organization investigating the mass executions of Jews and Roma in Eastern Europe between 1941 and 1944)
JULIA FROMHOLZ, Special Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2013, 2-4PM, DEAN ACHESON AUDITORIUM
(public entrance on 23rd Street, between C and D Streets)

International Day of Commemoration Flyer

A year later *The New York Times* ran an article from Oswiecim (Auschwitz) which is worth quoting liberally:[\[12\]](#)

Monday, the 69th anniversary of the day Soviet forces liberated Auschwitz, was observed as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Yet a third or more of the almost six million Jews killed in the Holocaust perished not in the industrial-scale murder of the camps, but in executions at what historians call killing sites: thousands of villages, quarries, forests, wells, streets and homes that dot the map of Eastern Europe.

The vast numbers killed in what some have termed a 'Holocaust by bullets' have slowly garnered greater attention in recent years as historians sift through often sketchy and incomplete records that became available after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As the number of Holocaust survivors gradually declines, these documents or witness accounts — from Belarus, Ukraine, parts of Russia and the Baltic States — have illuminated a new picture of the Nazis' methods.

In the years after 1945, the executions were not discussed much. The shock of the discovery of concentration camps was one factor. The camps had survivors, found in place, who told their unimaginable tale. By contrast, the local executions terrorized and silenced survivors in the eastern regions. In addition, after World War II, many witnesses were left behind the Iron Curtain, and no one was interested in their memories.

On the ground, 'news about killing in local fields spread much more quickly than the murky rumors' about gassing at concentration camps, Dr. Pohl said.

'Only a few survivors could testify after 1945,' he added. As a result, 'there is still no comprehensive overview of the killing sites.'

Dr. Silberklang said that 'in the popular mind, this subject is far less known than the Holocaust.' The executions became, he said, 'in a sense, invisible.'

One man who has sought out testimony for 12 years is the Rev. Patrick Desbois, a Roman Catholic priest from France who became involved after stumbling across Rava-Ruska, the location of a World War II prison camp in Ukraine for French soldiers where his paternal grandfather was interned.

Father Desbois, the only one in his family curious enough to have gotten his grandfather to discuss his memories, now has 23 full-time employees in Paris who crisscross former Soviet territory interviewing witnesses, 90 percent of whom had never told their tale, he said.

The killing was "secret for Western countries, at a high level," he said. "It was ultra-public in a village."

Father Desbois has worked with the American Jewish Committee on five sites in Ukraine and Belarus to clear them, find their parameters and have them marked. One difficulty, said Deidre Berger, the head of the committee in Berlin, is that Jewish tradition prohibits exhumation.

It is painstaking work, uncovering "a tragedy of vast dimensions that has been very little researched," Ms. Berger said at the Krakow conference. Yet, she noted, the work has huge significance, given that "more Jews were killed by shooting in Ukraine" — an estimated 1.5 million — "than murdered in Auschwitz in the crematoria."

Often, Ms. Berger said, "what we thought were facts are not facts at all."

"We must anticipate tomorrow," Father Desbois added, referring to still powerful anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, "when people will start to say, 'No, nothing happened here.'"

So here we have "a new picture of the Nazis' methods." The NYT playsfast and loose with its statistics. We are told that the number of Holocaust victims was "almost six million" and that "a third or more" perished in "what historians call killing sites: thousands of villages, quarries, forests, wells, streets and

homes that dot the map of Eastern Europe.” Later in the article the number involved is “an estimated 1.5 million.” Now 1.5 is one-third of 4.5. If it was more than one-third – e.g. one-half, then the total number of Holocaust dead would be 3.0 million. But even our 4.5 figure is not really almost 6. But then, as Dr. Pohl (a professor of history at Klagenfurt University) states, the gassings were just “murky rumors.”

We return to the problem of why it had taken so long to discover these murders which took place everywhere in the Ukraine? The answer: A combination of “The shock of the discovery of concentration camps” plus “the local executions terrorized and silenced survivors in the eastern regions,” plus “After World War II, many witnesses were left behind the Iron Curtain, and no one was interested in their memories.” That the news of mass killings on such a scale at thousands of sites should take a half-century to reach Western ears is stretching our credulity a bit far, even allowing for the terrible shock imparted by discovery of the concentration camps. Particularly as Dr. Pohl assures us that “news about killing in local fields spread much more quickly than the murky rumors” about gassing at concentration camps, and Father Desbois confirms that the killing “was ultra-public in a village.” Furthermore, the Soviet authorities had every interest to load murders onto the Nazis—as in the case of Katyn—when the news reached their ears. Hence we are surprised that no one was interested in their memories.

Although the executions took place at thousands of sites, Dr. Silberklang observes that they became “in a sense, invisible.” The method of achieving such a mass disappearing trick would surely interest professional magicians.

The Rev. Patrick Desbois reportedly “stumbled” across Rava-Ruska. The fact that his grandfather was imprisoned there surely helped orient the stumbling.

Ms. Berger laments that their painstaking work faces one difficulty — Jewish tradition prohibits exhumation. But the work has huge significance, since “more Jews were killed by shooting in Ukraine” — an estimated 1.5 million — “than murdered in Auschwitz in the crematoria.” The veto on exhumation (which, as noted earlier, is contested by Prof. Faurisson) conveniently prevents painstaking forensic work.

Finally, Ms. Berger pronounces enigmatically: “what we thought were facts are not facts at all.” What exactly does this mean?

More recently, UNESCO in Paris organized a “*Shoah by Bullets*” exhibition between 26 January and 10 February 2015. Exhibitions also opened in Vilnius (Lithuania) on 1 October 2015 and, for the first time in Latin America, in Guatemala City on 5 October 2015.

Father Desbois was elected *Doctor Honoris Causa* by Yeshiva University, New York in 2011, by New York University in 2012, and by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, in 2015. He was also made an Honorary Doctor of Divinity by the University of Winnipeg in 2013, and has been distinguished by a slew of Israeli universities and Jewish organizations. Furthermore, the *Université Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne* is holding seminars on *La “Shoah par Balles”* during the current academic year.

The then French President Sarkozy decorated Desbois with the *Légion d’honneur* on 12 June 2008 for “a major contribution to historic and scientific knowledge of the extermination of the Jews of Europe.”

The degree to which *The Holocaust by Bullets* has been hailed as a seminal work of historic significance and the extraordinary naivety with which its findings have been accepted in the absence of critical appraisal would be incomprehensible were it not for the fact that it deals with the *Shoah*. Was the story concocted by Monique de Waels in the hoax *Misha: A Mémoire of the Holocaust Years* any less probable than several phenomena we have identified in *The Holocaust by Bullets*?

When it comes to the *Shoah*, we are transported outside the realm of normality into a virtual reality where the generally accepted rules of reasoning and research no longer apply. In response to two letters from Professor Faurisson published by the French daily *Le Monde*, 34 French historians published a declaration (“The Hitlerite Extermination Policy: a Declaration by Historians”) in the 21 February 1979 issue of this same newspaper. The concluding sentences of this declaration amount to a denunciation of scholarship and, like the Decalogue, deserve to be carved into stone:

Technical questions as to how such a mass murder was possible are beside the point. It was technically possible since it happened. Acceptance of this fact is a sine qua non for any enquiry into this subject matter. It was incumbent upon us to re-state this truth. There is not, and there cannot be, any debate about the existence of the gas chambers.

Le Monde refused Prof. Faurisson the right to publish his reply to this article.

Fundamentally, the *Shoah* has become holy writ whose sanctity is assured by an all-powerful Thought Police which exercises sway over politicians, academe, the media, etc. Its task is to track down and suppress manifestations of heresy. In Europe, which lacks a First Amendment [to the Constitution of the United States], it has obtained the passage of legislation to stifle freedom of expression in a number of countries. While the *EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline* trumpets *urbi et orbi* that: “Freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental rights of every human being,” it is a dead letter as far as the *Shoah* is concerned.[\[13\]](#)

Judicial repression is complemented by well-proven and very effective measures to suppress “unorthodox” views. Owners of auditoria are threatened either physically or with being black-listed, newspapers are threatened with the withdrawal of advertising. Apostates risk professional and/or financial ruin. The ultimate resort is to physical violence. Professor Faurisson, writing in 2013, conveys an idea of the treatment to which non-conformist researchers are subjected:[\[14\]](#)

In total, from November 1978 to May 1993, I was to suffer ten assaults in Lyon, Paris, Stockholm and Vichy. I cannot say how many court cases have been brought against me, or that I myself have had to bring, from 1978 until today. I shall not devote space here to the convictions, fines, police searches and seizures at my house and arrests for questioning. Unlike so many revisionists who have had to do years in prison (up to twelve years in one case), I have never been sentenced to actual imprisonment. At the age of 83, I have just been served notice of three criminal proceedings and a fourth looms likely.

What the custodians of orthodoxy fear above all is an open debate on television. In an interview accorded *Le Monde* on 4 August 2006, when it was put to P. Vidal-Naquet that a proposal to convene a meeting of historians on the *Shoah* would risk providing a forum for negationists, he agreed wholeheartedly:

Of course, I refuse this in the strongest possible terms. The day one accepts one of these individuals in a public debate on television or in a colloquium of historians, they will have won the game. They would be considered a (legitimate) school of thought. We must be ruthless in denying them this.

The reception accorded *The Holocaust by Bullets* and the honors bestowed upon its author are to be viewed against this background. Father Desbois's exploitation of the rich *Shoah* vein has projected him from obscurity to become something of a celebrity and a protégé of powerful interests.

We owe respect to the living; to the dead we owe only truth (On doit des égards aux vivants; on ne doit aux morts que la vérité).

— *Voltaire*, Lettres écrites en 1719 qui contiennent la critique de l'

Notes:

- [1] See e.g. F. J. P. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism* (Appleton Wisc.: C.C. Nelson Publishing, 1953).
- [2] See <http://www.balderexlibris.com/index.php?post/The-holocaust-controversy-The-case-for-open-debate>.
- [3] The French newspaper *Le Figaro* of 15 October 2009 reported that the German Government paid a 500 thousand Euros subsidy to *Yahad - In Unum* in 2009 and that the European Union also participates in its financing.
- [4] Quotes are from The First St. Martin's Griffin Edition: November 2009.
- [5] Page ix in the foreword flags the fact that Father Desbois's activities are supported by the Catholic Church of France, footnoting that "Archbishop of Paris Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, now deceased, and Andre Cardinal Vingt-Trois, who succeeded him, have both provided strong backing. Both visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in 2006 and 2008 respectively, for the purpose of speaking publicly about the imperative of Holocaust education and the importance of cooperative work by Christians and Jews to study the Holocaust."
- [6] Director, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- [7] In normal usage "archaeological" relates to the study of antiquities, or pre-historic remains.
- [8] See <http://robertfaurisson.blogspot.com/2008/09/pour-finir-la-mascarade-du-pere-patrick.html>
- [9] Online: <http://www.popsoci.com/article/science/how-long-could-you-survive-coffin-if-you-were-buried-alive>.

- [10] See http://www.delpla.org/article.php3?id_article=416 and <http://www.cairn.info/revue-vingtieme-siecle-revue-d-histoire-2009-2-page-3.htm>. Desbois does, however, recognize the earlier work of Leon WelicznerWells (see p. 114).
- [11] In France in particular S. Klarsfeld of the “Association of the Sons and Daughters of Jews deported from France.” See the reference to delpla.org in Footnote 10.
- [12] Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/28/world/europe/a-light-on-a-vast-toll-of-jews-killed-away-from-the-death-camps.html>
- [13] Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. Article 1: Offences concerning racism and xenophobia. Each Member State shall take the measures necessary to ensure that the following intentional conduct is punishable: d) publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising the crimes defined in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal appended to the London Agreement of 8 August 1945, directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group. Online: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/documents/eu-human-rights-guidelines-on-freedom-of-expression-online-and-offline-en.pdf>
- [14] Online: <http://robertfaurisson.blogspot.com/2012/08/on-december-29-1978-le-monde-published.html>. This site also furnishes a chronology of how revisionist views have progressed despite the repression.

Author(s) :	Kosto Tamo
Title:	The Holocaust by Bullets
Sources:	<i>Inconvenient History</i> , 8(1) 2016
Dates:	published: 2016-03-14, first posted: 2016-03-15 01:35:00

<http://inconvenienthistory.com/8/1/4030>